

# Calls for U.S. Counter-Weapon Intensify

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The Soviets' new orbital rocket confronts the United States with a whole new set of military problems because it could be the first weapon to take the high ground of outer space.

U.S. experts pointed out yesterday that the Fractional Orbital Bombardment System (FOBS) the Soviets are testing need not pass Pentagon cost-effectiveness tests to fulfill its mission. It is not supposed to be a better ICBM, but a terror weapon.

The psychological impact of a hydrogen bomb whirling over the United States with the release button in the Kremlin cannot be ignored by the Johnson Administration.

And as the anti-ballistic-missile debate showed, lawmakers are likely to insist that the Defense Department come up with some counter weapon.

## McNamara's Argument

The argument by Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara that the United States is already naked against a massive ICBM attack, so why worry about FOBS, ignores the fact that many lawmakers regard the anti-Chinese ABM as the first step toward a Soviet one.

Early Congressional reaction to FOBS already shows that the United States must

find a way to reach the same high ground taken by the Soviets.

Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.), for example, said in an interview yesterday that the Russian orbital rocket "has opened up a whole new dimension of problems."

He said the United States, as a starter, would have to speed development of anti-satellite weapons and build a lot more detection radar. He opens public hearings Monday to explore these questions with Administration witnesses.

Paul H. Nitze, newly named Deputy Secretary of Defense, and John S. Foster Jr., Pentagon research chief, are slated to lead off before Jackson's Military Applications Subcommittee of the Joint Atomic Energy Committee.

Republicans in Congress are already making an issue out of McNamara's statement that "I'm not concerned" about FOBS. Rep. William L. Dickinson (R-Ala.) said in a telegram to President Johnson yesterday that McNamara should be fired for such unconcern.

Congressional critics are expected to press Pentagon witnesses for details on what working hardware the United States has against the FOBS.

McNamara—in confirming Friday that the Soviets have been testing orbital rockets—said that the United

States had a new detection radar. But officials admit it is limited. Over-the-horizon radar has been under development for years. But the type that really gives meaningful information about Soviet launches hidden from existing radar and spy satellites has only begun to operate.

## Satellite Interception

Also, the U.S. has no fool-proof system for intercepting and inspecting a foreign satellite to see if a bomb is inside. And weapons in hand for knocking a hostile satellite down also have limited effectiveness.

Gen. Earle G. Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee this spring on the treaty to ban weapons in outer space said the chiefs "remain concerned about the assured verification capability with regards to weapons in orbit. The deployment of prohibited orbital vehicles could have serious implications, especially if it enabled an effective enemy surprise attack against our command and control facilities and military forces.

"Weapons in orbit," Wheeler continued, "could become a matter of grave consequence, particularly when utilized in conjunction with other strategic systems. . . . This threat can be answered

only through intensified U.S. effort to develop capabilities to detect and verify the orbiting of nuclear weapons or those threatening mass destruction.

At the same hearings former Deputy Secretary of Defense Cyrus R. Vance and Wheeler agreed that "one or two or some very small number of weapons" could "be clandestinely orbited without being identified."

But "to be militarily significant," said Vance, "a large number of weapons would have to be deployed, and this would certainly be detected."

MIRV—multiple, independently targetable re-entry vehicles—is one of the "strategic systems" which conceivably could be used with the Soviet orbiting rocket.

## Several Little Bombs

MIRV is the technique of dividing a big bomb into several little ones and then sending each of them to a different target. Some military leaders fear the Soviets might put a MIRV warhead on their orbital rocket

Jackson said using MIRV with FOBS would make bombs "come down like Roman candles." Even without MIRV, he argued, FOBS "represents a qualitative jump in their strategic weapons capability." The United States, he said, needs "more and improved defenses" against FOBS.

It appears certain that by testing an orbital weapons system the Russians have undercut McNamara's effort to hold back the arms race. The tests come at a time when he seemed to be making progress in convincing the American public and U.S. allies of the folly of building a bigger mountain of weapons or a thick missile defense.